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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 1458th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 23 July 1996, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. SAMANA (Papua New Guinea)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

QUESTION OF GIBRALTAR (A/AC.109/2057)

1. The CHAIRMAN said that the delegation of Spain had indicated its wish to participate in the consideration of the question of Gibraltar, and suggested that the Committee should invite the representative of Spain to take a place at the Committee table.

2. It was so decided.

3. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that the Chief Minister of Gibraltar, Mr. Peter Caruana, had asked to make a statement on the item under consideration; he suggested that the Committee should accede to that request.

4. It was so decided.

5. Mr. CARUANA (Chief Minister of Gibraltar) reaffirmed the conviction of Gibraltarians that Gibraltar was their homeland, their birthright and the legitimate inheritance of their children. Those rights arose not only from legal and technical foundations but also from an identity which was distinct both from the British and from the Spanish. Gibraltarians were the unique product of 300 years of development, a cohesive people shaped by many different cultural, ethnic and religious influences. Without denying their long history of association with the United Kingdom, the people of Gibraltar were determined to win recognition of their right to self-determination, with the help of the Special Committee. The main obstacle to the achievement of their aspirations remained Spain's continued anachronistic claim to sovereignty over Gibraltar, and its sustained campaign of psychological, economic and political pressure. That hostility had led to a relationship with the Spanish State which was marked by resentment and mistrust; however, there were numerous exchanges between the communities on both sides of the frontier, based on the recognition that they shared a common environment and that there was great capacity for economic and cultural cooperation between them.

6. Those contacts were useful but they were not a substitute for the need to establish a new climate between London, Madrid and Gibraltar. The election of a new Government in Gibraltar presented an opportunity to pursue such an approach. Gibraltarians wished to exercise their right to self-determination through dialogue and cooperation, rather than through confrontation. While the decolonization of Gibraltar without Spanish acquiescence would be an improvement over its current status, it would not be the preferred option; the Government of Gibraltar would prefer a process that was acceptable to the neighbouring State.

7. Section IV (H) of the working paper prepared by the Secretariat on the subject (A/AC.109/2057), concerning crime and crime prevention, gave an inaccurate representation of the position in respect of drug trafficking and other smuggling in Gibraltar. Spain's remarks on that subject were particularly regrettable. In fact, the Government of Gibraltar had taken stern measures in 1995 to curtail such illegal activities, and that had been publicly recognized by the Spanish authorities themselves. Since then, trafficking had practically

ceased. Spain's failure to recognize, at the United Nations, the enormous efforts that Gibraltar had made and the outstanding success it had achieved in that area was inexplicable. Spain would do well to take similar measures against trafficking within its own territory. Section H also referred to the permissive financial system of Gibraltar which, according to the Spanish authorities, was made up of "shady companies" which presented "an impregnable obstacle to the eradication of drug trafficking". In fact, Gibraltar's company law was based on that of the United Kingdom and the common law systems prevalent throughout the Commonwealth. Its banking system conformed with European Union directives, as did its regulations against money laundering. The problem was not that the system was permissive, but rather that Spain, by refusing to recognize Gibraltar's courts of law, refused to avail itself of existing mechanisms in the international fight against drugs.

8. The sole purpose of Spain's accusations against Gibraltar was to cast doubt on the legitimacy of the Gibraltarians' claims to be a people having a right to self-determination.

9. Gibraltar also rejected the assertion of the representative of Spain, made in paragraph 62 of the same document, that according to the United Nations doctrine, the decolonization of Gibraltar was not a question of self-determination but rather a question of restoration of the territorial integrity of Spain. General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV) stated clearly that there was only one process of decolonization, namely self-determination.

10. The first priority was therefore to build trust among the three parties, by recognizing that the Gibraltarians were the main participants in all matters affecting Gibraltar. Trilateral talks should be set up in which Gibraltarians would have their own voice alongside that of their partners. The present-day democratic and liberal Spain would recognize that any process of cooperation which involved coercion upon Gibraltar should be rejected. The European Union should also attempt to reduce the tensions which marred relations between two of its Member States. Progress must be made and the solution of other conflicts, such as those in the Middle East and South Africa, made it possible to hope that the principles of democratic participation and self-determination would also be brought to bear on the Territory. Gibraltar simply wished to be recognized as a small community within the European Union, that was seeking to decide its future status freely and in harmony with its neighbours.

11. Mr. KHAN (Secretary of the Committee) said that section H of document A/AC.109/2057 was based on the positions of the Governments of Spain and the United Kingdom.

12. Mr. PÉREZ-GRIFFO (Spain) recalled that the decolonization of Gibraltar was a priority for his country. The people and the various political movements of Spain wished to restore the country's territorial integrity, and the United Nations had, in a number of resolutions, established that the decolonization of the Territory should take place in accordance with the principle of territorial integrity. General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) stated that the principles of self-determination of peoples and of territorial integrity must be compatible; that point was of paramount importance. General Assembly resolution 2625 (XXV) reaffirmed that any breach of the territorial integrity of States was

incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Resolution 2353 (XXII) on the question of Gibraltar stated that any colonial situation which partially or completely destroyed the national unity and territorial integrity of a country was incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations; and resolution 2429 (XXIII) had reaffirmed that the continuation of the colonial situation in Gibraltar was incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter.

13. In accordance with the wishes of the General Assembly, the Governments of Spain and the United Kingdom had agreed, by the 1984 Brussels Declaration, to begin negotiations in 1985, and those negotiations had continued since that time. The Gibraltarians had participated in them within the framework of the British delegation until 1988, when they had decided to withdraw; that had been a regrettable decision, and the local authorities should reconsider it.

14. Spain had no intention of harming the people of Gibraltar, and would take their interests and their autonomous institutions into account. The Government was prepared to guarantee all those aspects in the context of a negotiated settlement. Dialogue must go ahead, with the participation of the Gibraltarian authorities. However, the Spanish Government had reservations concerning certain petitions and statements that had been made at the current meeting and it reserved the right to make a further statement on the subject at the appropriate time.

15. Mr. Pérez-Griffo withdrew.

16. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had concluded its consideration of the question of Gibraltar.

ACTIVITIES OF FOREIGN ECONOMIC AND OTHER INTERESTS WHICH IMPEDE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES IN TERRITORIES UNDER COLONIAL DOMINATION

MILITARY ACTIVITIES AND ARRANGEMENTS BY COLONIAL POWERS IN TERRITORIES UNDER THEIR ADMINISTRATION (A/AC.109/L.1846 and 1847)

Draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1847

17. Mrs. KHAN-CUMMINGS (Trinidad and Tobago) proposed replacing "self-determination and independence" by "self-determination, including independence" in paragraphs 1, 4 and 13 of the draft resolution and deleting the word "full" in paragraph 12.

18. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Committee should adopt draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1847, as orally revised, without a vote.

19. It was so decided.

Draft decision A/AC.109/L.1846

20. The CHAIRMAN proposed adopting draft decision A/AC.109/L.1846 without a vote.

21. It was so decided.

QUESTION OF EAST TIMOR

22. The CHAIRMAN said that the delegation of Sao Tome and Principe, speaking also on behalf of Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique, had asked to participate in the discussion of the question of East Timor. He proposed that the Committee should grant its request.

23. It was so decided.

24. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the working paper prepared by the Secretariat (A/AC.109/2049 and Corr.1 and 2) and to the request for hearings contained in aide-mémoire 10/96/Add.1.

25. Mr. BAPTISTA (Indonesia) said that his delegation strongly objected to consideration of the question by the Special Committee. Recalling that the General Assembly had been deferring consideration since 1983, he said that the Committee, which had its mandate from the Assembly, should do likewise. While it was true that East Timor was on the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories, it was important to consider not so much the situation which prevailed at the time the list was drawn up as that which currently prevailed. His delegation was also strongly opposed to the hearing of petitioners on the question of East Timor.

26. Mr. GAMITO (Portugal) said that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1542 (XV), East Timor was a Non-Self-Governing Territory. Because it had that status, which Portugal had recognized in its Constitutional Act of 1974, East Timor, like all other Non-Self-Governing Territories, had always been included in the agenda of the Special Committee: at first as a Territory under Portuguese administration and, after 1975, as a separate question. Every year, the Secretary-General requested Portugal to provide him with information under Article 73 e of the Charter of the United Nations, and the Portuguese Government had always complied. Portugal confirmed its status as an administering Power, even though, de facto, the illegal occupation of the Territory by Indonesia prevented it from exercising that responsibility. It always cooperated actively with the Special Committee, whose competence it fully recognized. In any case, the fact that the General Assembly had deferred consideration of the question had never led the Special Committee to remove the question from its agenda or to refrain from considering it. He also wished to point out that the purpose of such consideration was to prepare a report for presentation to the Assembly at its fifty-first session. Moreover, the question of East Timor was included in the Assembly's provisional agenda.

27. Obviously, East Timor had not been decolonized and Indonesia forcibly and illegally occupied the Non-Self-Governing Territory, in violation of the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. The situation could

not be invoked to justify neglect of the question by the Special Committee; if it did neglect the question it would no longer be discharging the mandate conferred upon it. As long as discussions between the interested parties were taking place under the auspices of the Secretary-General, changing the framework in which the question of East Timor was considered by the United Nations would introduce an element of instability and stall action by the Secretary-General.

28. Mr. BAPTISTA (Indonesia) said that East Timor had indeed been decolonized and that the Territory had exercised its right to self-determination and had chosen integration into Indonesia.

29. Mr. GAMITO (Portugal) said that the United Nations recognized East Timor not as a Territory integrated into Indonesia but rather as a Non-Self-Governing Territory.

30. The CHAIRMAN proposed to the Committee that it should grant the requests for hearings which had been submitted to it.

31. It was so decided.

32. At the invitation of the Chairman, Ms. Pires (União Democrática Timorense) took a place at the petitioners' table.

33. Ms. PIRES (União Democrática Timorense) said that her organization had first delivered a statement to the Special Committee in 1987 when it had denounced the integration of East Timor as the so-called 27th province of Indonesia. The human rights situation since then had worsened steadily, as a direct consequence of the illegal annexation of the Territory. The question of East Timor had today become a subject of concern for many people all over the world and was considered in international bodies by the highest-level authorities.

34. The situation inside the Territory had become volatile. Young people were prepared to demonstrate in the streets, risking their lives, in order to express their despair and their dissatisfaction, and to appeal for the support of the international community so that they could realize their aspirations to peace and freedom. The repression perpetrated by the Indonesian army and the fear and violence it had spread in the Territory had become intolerable for the inhabitants. The "transmigration" programme, designed to expel inhabitants from their ancestral lands and marginalize them in their own country, was an example of a more subtle strategy to deprive the East Timorese of their rights.

35. The people had not yet had an opportunity to exercise their right to self-determination, because the decolonization process initiated by Portugal had been aborted in 1975 when Indonesia had invaded the Territory. The General Assembly and the Security Council had adopted 10 resolutions on the question, all of which reaffirmed that right.

36. In the context of self-determination and independence, the concept of development could sometimes be misleading. Development and stability were two different concepts for purposes of determining who the beneficiaries and what the objectives of development were. For example, road-building, by facilitating

the movement of the army and enabling it to tighten its control over a Territory, was not conducive to increasing stability any more than the establishment of family planning services which inspired fear and mistrust in the local population. The depletion of forests in East Timor by military-owned conglomerates was not favourable to development of the Territory either.

37. The Special Committee must also protect the rights of women to self-determination, in particular, their reproductive rights as one of the essential components of the process. In that connection, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) had recently published a report which cited East Timor in the category of the most underpopulated Territories in the world, with an extremely high infant mortality rate. Even though it was extremely underpopulated and had lost almost approximately one third of its population since 1975, the Territory was compelled to follow an aggressive family planning programme which specifically targeted women. According to various sources, many East Timorese women were subjected to forced sterilization. There were also many instances of rape by soldiers of the Indonesian army, which was not only a violation of women's rights but also of the fundamental rights of a people. Rape was used as a tool of war in East Timor. The Indonesian Government was thus attempting to use force in order to assert its sovereignty over the East Timorese and to deny them the right to self-determination.

38. In conclusion, she urged the Special Committee to take all necessary steps within its mandate in order to ensure that the East Timorese could exercise their right to self-determination and that a just and comprehensive solution was found to the question of East Timor.

39. Ms. Pires withdrew.

40. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Le Melle (Amnesty International) took a place at the petitioners' table.

41. Mr. LE MELLE (Amnesty International) noted that no firm proposal for improving the situation in East Timor, particularly in the field of human rights, had been made during the eighth round of United Nations sponsored talks between the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia and Portugal. The protection of human rights should be at the core of any discussion concerning the future of the Territory. The people of East Timor, however, should not have to await the final outcome of those discussions for an end to the torture inflicted on them at the hands of Indonesian security forces and the Indonesian Government should take immediate steps to improve the human rights situation in the Territory.

42. In order to put an end to the gross violations of human rights in East Timor, Amnesty International had proposed the previous year that, among other things, the Indonesian Government should take concrete action to address the root causes of such violations, that independent monitoring of violations should be guaranteed and, finally, that the international community should consistently condemn abuses. None of those steps had been taken and the human rights situation in East Timor had deteriorated further with extrajudicial killings, "disappearances", arbitrary arrests, torture, beatings and unfair political trials continuing throughout the year. Amnesty International was particularly

concerned that disturbances in the Territory were sometimes being used as a pretext for waves of arrest. The initiatives taken by the Indonesian Government during the year were purely cosmetic and directed principally at the appeasement of international and domestic critics.

43. During his visit to Indonesia in December 1995, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had recommended, inter alia, that the Indonesian Government should cooperate fully with the United Nations in the field of human rights, compensate the victims of the Dili massacre, continue the search for persons who had "disappeared", grant clemency to civilians who had been convicted for expressing political dissent, and repeal its anti-subversion law. The High Commissioner had also suggested that the Indonesian National Commission for Human Rights should consider investigating past violations, including the events which had taken place in Dili in 1991. Amnesty International welcomed those recommendations but was extremely concerned that the Indonesian Government had not acted on them. Moreover, the authorities had given no indication of any intention to release East Timorese prisoners of conscience. The fact that the Government had, with rare exceptions, failed to conduct any investigations of the events in Dili and other violations committed in East Timor had led to virtual impunity for the security forces.

44. While it was true that the International Committee of the Red Cross now had greater access to detainees in East Timor, that alone would not bring an end to the torture and ill-treatment which they suffered. The recent establishment in Dili of an office of the Indonesian National Commission for Human Rights was a welcome step. However, the limitations on the power and functions of that body meant that its role was necessarily limited. In any case, the Commission could not be a substitute for international, independent monitoring.

45. The concessions made by the Indonesian Government with regard to access to East Timor were insufficient. Amnesty International was among those organizations still being denied such access, as were the international media. The provisional agreement by the Indonesian Government to look into the possibility of assigning a UNDP representative in Jakarta to follow up the implementation of technical cooperation agreements was insufficient. Such a presence would have no impact at all on the human rights situation in East Timor unless the representative in question had full access to the Territory and a specific mandate to monitor the human rights situation there. The international community must cease to accept uncritically the Indonesian Government's vague promises of cooperation.

46. The lack of genuine political will on the part of the Indonesian Government should now be evident to all concerned. Most of the recommendations of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and other United Nations organs were still to be implemented. Yet the Commission continued to ignore that fact and refused to note that, despite Indonesia's promises of cooperation, no progress had been made in protecting and promoting the human rights of the people of East Timor. It was time for the international community to ensure that the Indonesian Government was held to its commitments in that regard.

47. Mr. Le Melle withdrew.

48. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Wainfeld (TAPOL - the Indonesia Human Rights Campaign) took a place at the petitioners' table.

49. Mr. WAINFELD (TAPOL) said that the military occupation was at the core of the just struggle of the people of East Timor for self-determination. The Indonesian military structure had changed over the years; in the early years, all military operations had been directly controlled by the armed forces headquarters in Jakarta. A special military command had been set up for that purpose. The massive military operations from 1977 to 1982 were devastating proof of the ferocity of the battle waged by that military command (KOOPSKAM) to crush the resistance. By the late 1980s, the new kind of resistance waged by young people, a sort of Intifada, had led to the disbanding of KOOPSKAM and its replacement by a special command (KOLAKOPS) which focused primarily on counter-insurgency operations. KOLAKOPS had itself been disbanded and replaced by an ordinary regional territorial command called KOREM, which was the same type of command that existed elsewhere in Indonesia. Nevertheless, East Timor continued to be regarded as a trouble spot by the Indonesian armed forces which were still sent there for tours of duty of between three and six months. Platoons were still located in villages ostensibly for civilian duties, although in reality they were there to keep watch over the population, in particular young people suspected of involvement in clandestine activities.

50. Since the invasion in 1975, East Timor had been treated as a special military project and had become a kind of laboratory for various military strategies and tactics. Since the dissolution of KOLAKOPS, the Indonesian police force, which was an integral part of the armed forces, had become the new arm of repression. That cosmetic change from the army to the police was an attempt to improve the battered image of the Indonesian army, which had been the object of international condemnation in the wake of the Santa Cruz bloodbath in 1991. That did not mean, however, that the human rights situation was any better.

51. By and large, the role of the KOPASSUS, the notorious red berets, was still dominant. Their aim was to mould the East Timorese into model Indonesian citizens, using all possible means, including force.

52. The Santa Cruz massacre had catapulted the East Timor drama onto the international arena and the seriousness of the problem of human rights violations had been recognized. In international forums, and within the European Parliament and the European Union in particular, the illegal occupation of the Territory had been criticized as never before. Similar pressure was also being brought to bear inside Indonesia. The Indonesian public had become aware that something terribly wrong was happening in East Timor. Many young people and the new pro-democracy movement in Indonesia were nowadays calling for a just solution to the problem along the lines of an internationally organized referendum that would permit the people of East Timor to exercise their right to self-determination.

53. The international community did not recognize the integration of East Timor into Indonesia and the fact that the question was included in the agenda of the Special Committee was proof of the illegal nature of the occupation. East Timor was still a Non-Self-Governing Territory. As a result of international

pressure, the Indonesian Government had grudgingly accepted international standards as being applicable to East Timor. Similar pressure would have to be exerted for Indonesia to agree to the presence in the Territory of United Nations human rights monitors.

54. It was a matter of profound regret that the meetings between the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia and Portugal, which had been held under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General, had virtually reached a stalemate because of the unwillingness of Indonesia to discuss matters of substance. The United Nations should take new initiatives to end such intransigence.

55. Mr. Wainfeld withdrew.

56. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Seltzer (Philippine Solidarity with East Timor and Indonesia) took a place at the petitioners' table.

57. Mr. SELTZER (Philippine Solidarity with East Timor and Indonesia) said that for more than 20 years the Maubere people had resolutely struggled against Indonesia's illegal occupation of their homeland. Although they had achieved some success, the international community, nevertheless, should urgently take concrete action in order to bring about a just resolution of the question of East Timor, put an end to the torture and suffering endured by the population and restore peace. The countries of the Asia-Pacific region, particularly those that were members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), had an important role to play in that regard. Although the Asia-Pacific region had become increasingly important economically over the past few years, it was also the region where the worst cases of human rights violations were committed and where some countries had even challenged the universality of human rights. Although the international community gave great attention to that region, no Government was seeking to find a just solution to the East Timor problem. He wished to note in particular the hypocrisy of the ASEAN member countries in their so-called efforts to promote peace and development in the region. One might ask what principles guided the Association, which had recently decided to improve its relations with the military Government of Myanmar. On that occasion, President Suharto had called upon powerful States not to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries.

58. Mr. BAPTISTA (Indonesia), speaking on a point of order, objected to the remarks made by the previous speaker, which, in his opinion, bore no relation to the topic under discussion.

59. The CHAIRMAN requested the petitioner to observe the Special Committee's rules in that regard.

60. Mr. CAMITO (Portugal) asked the representative of Indonesia to explain his comment and said that petitioners were entitled to speak freely.

61. Mr. BAPTISTA (Indonesia) expressed strong objections to the remarks made by the previous speaker.

62. Mr. SELTZER (Philippine Solidarity with East Timor and Indonesia), resuming his statement, said that if ASEAN could not find any leaders to represent it other than the President of Indonesia, who had proclaimed the official integration of East Timor into his country, contrary to the aspirations of the East Timorese themselves, or the Indonesian Minister for Foreign Affairs, who continuously denied the existence of a legitimate resistance movement in East Timor, there was very little hope that the Association could ever put forward a peace plan for the Territory. How could Indonesia be an agent for peace in other parts of the region and an agent of violence against the East Timorese people? How could other Governments turn a blind eye to the atrocities committed in the Territory by the Indonesian military?

63. He appealed to the Committee to help put an end to the increasing human rights abuses in East Timor as well as the arbitrary arrests and the sexual exploitation of East Timorese women by Indonesian soldiers, and to work for the release of all political prisoners and he called upon the Committee to urge the ASEAN member countries to take constructive measures in East Timor and promote genuine peace in the region. The East Timorese people deserved no less than the full exercise of their inalienable right to self-determination.

64. Mr. Seltzer withdrew.

65. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Hoffmann (Watch Indonesia!) took a place at the petitioners' table.

66. Mr. HOFFMANN (Watch Indonesia!) said that his group, which had been founded in 1991, consisted of Indonesians, Portuguese and Germans and aimed to promote democracy and respect for human rights in Indonesia and East Timor; through its activities, it sought to raise the awareness of German society and influence the policy of the German Government.

67. In 1995 and 1996, more than 200 young Timorese had sought refuge in several foreign embassies in Jakarta. Eight of them, who had tried to enter the German Embassy, had been handed over to the Indonesian military, who had then beaten them in the presence of a camera team. That proved that the Indonesian Government did not fear any consequences of its disregard for human rights.

68. Indonesia had annexed East Timor more than 20 years earlier, in violation of international law. Although it had never recognized that annexation and despite the continuous violation of human rights, the international community had failed to exert the necessary pressure on that country to find a peaceful solution.

69. In February 1996, his group had joined approximately 40 other organizations from around the world in issuing a statement on the nearly 200 requests for political asylum addressed to several embassies in Jakarta, indicating that all the requests had been refused and that the only choice for those who had submitted them was to go to Portugal, which had already received more than 75 such persons in the past four months. Dozens had been arrested by Indonesian security forces and others had been expelled from the embassies where they had sought refuge and handed over to the police. Those young people were fleeing persecution in East Timor, where the military repression continued to intensify.

by emigrating to Portugal, Australia and elsewhere. They confronted the international community with a new problem, forcing Governments to take immediate decisions that would affect the future of the individuals concerned as well as that of the nation of East Timor.

70. In that connection, all Governments with embassies in Jakarta should exert pressure on Indonesia to take immediate steps to improve the human rights situation in East Timor and should instruct their embassies to do everything possible to comply with requests for political asylum submitted to them. Embassy premises could not be entered by Indonesian personnel without prior authorization, and countries should assume their legal obligations and insist on respect for their rights. A mechanism should be established enabling asylum-seekers to express their wishes and freely choose their country of immigration and putting an end to pressures designed to send them systematically to Portugal. Asylum-seekers should also be given access by telephone to lawyers in the country where they wished to live. Furthermore, Governments that asked Portugal to accept asylum-seekers from their embassies should state publicly that they were taking that step because Portugal was the internationally recognized administering authority for the Non-Self-Governing Territory of East Timor.

71. All democratic countries should assist Portugal, for which accepting greater numbers of East Timorese refugees was becoming an increasing economic burden. As numerous Security Council and General Assembly resolutions had stated, Indonesia's brutal invasion and occupation of East Timor created an international responsibility. Accepting refugees was part of that responsibility.

72. The role of the United Nations in resolving the question of East Timor was crucial. He therefore asked the Special Committee to influence the Indonesian Government to improve the human rights situation in the Territory so that the people were no longer forced to seek refuge in foreign embassies. The Committee should also actively support the right to self-determination of the East Timorese and their demand for a referendum in international forums.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.